

## Message Text

SECRET

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14

ACTION EA-13

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 NSCE-00 NSC-10 INRE-00 INR-09

CIAE-00 NSAE-00 PM-03 DODE-00 IO-03 EUR-10 OMB-01

RSR-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 /067 W  
----- 103041

P R 040725 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9605

INFO USDEL JEC PARIS

S E C R E T SAIGON 5589

LIMDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS MOPS MCAP VS

SUBJECT: GRVN PLANS STRATEGY TO HOLD TON LE CHAM OUTPOST

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SAIGON, INFO CAN THO, NHA TRANG AND DANANG  
FROM BIEN HOA ON 4 APR 73, BEING REPEATED FOR YOUR ACTION.

QUOTE

1. III CORPS CG LTG NGUYEN VAN MINH TODAY TOLD ME THAT VICE  
PRESIDENT HUONG, ACTING FOR PRESIDENT THIEU WHILE HS IS IN THE UNITED  
STATES, CHAIRED A MEETING YESTERDAY IN HIS OFFICE TO DISCUSS WHAT  
STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN TO RELIEVE COMMUNIST PRESSURE ON TON LE CHAM,  
THE BESEIGED RANGER OUTPOST ON THE BORDER OF TAY NINH AND BINH LONG  
PROVINCES. MINH SAID THAT, IN ADDITION TO HIMSELF AND THE VICE  
PRESIDENT, PRIME MINISTER KHIEM AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE JGS  
PARTICIPATED IN THE DISCUSSIONS. ACCORDING TO MINH, THE MEETING HAD  
TWO SEPARATE AND DISTINCT PROPOSITIONS BEFORE IT FOR CONSIDERATION:  
THE FIRST PROPOSITION, WHICH MINH DESCRIBED AS PLAN A, CALLED FOR  
POLITICAL INTERVENTION ( ICCS ROUTE), INCREASED AIR STRIKES AND A  
REGULAR RESUPPLY RUN. THE ALTERNATIVE, WHICH MINH CALLED PLAN B,  
COMMITTED THE GRVN TO AN ALL- OUT ASSAULT ON THE COMMUNISTS, USING  
UNITS FROM EACH OF THE THREE ARVN DIVISIONS IN THIS MILITARY  
REGION TO CARRY IT OUT. MINH SAID THAT THE GROUP OPTED FOR PLAN A  
FOR THE TIME BEING, HOLDING PLAN B IN ABEYANCE UNTIL PRESIDENT

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THIEU RETURNS.

2. I ASKED MINH WHAT HIS CHANCES WERE FOR HOLDING TON LE CHAM FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD. MINH REPLIED BY DRAWING A GRAPHIC PICTURE OF THE OUTPOST, RECOUNTING THE EXPERIENCES OF THE PAST TEN DAYS, AND ENDED UP BY TELLING ME THAT THE OUTPOST CURRENTLY HAS 20 DAYS OF FOOD SUPPLIES ON HAND AND THAT HE FORESEES NO FUTURE PROBLEMS RESUPPLYING IT WITH BOTH FOOD AND AMMUNITION. MOREOVER, HE ADDED, QUOTE WE WILL CONTINUE OUR AIR STRIKES AND WILL INCREASE THEM STARTING TOMORROW UNQUOTE.

3. WE THEN DISCUSSED HIS VIEWS ON COMMUNIST MILITARY INTENTIONS IN THE NEXT 30-60 DAYS. MINH PREDICTED THAT THE COMMUNISTS WILL CONTINUE WHAT THEY ARE DOING NOW FOR THE ENTIRE MONTH OF APRIL AND WILL, ON MAY DAY, LAUNCH WHAT HE CALLS A QUOTE POLITICAL UNQUOTE OFFENSIVE. WHEN I ASKED HIM WHAT HE MEANT BY THAT, HE SAID THAT THE COMMUNISTS WOULD EMPLOY MILITARY TACTICS TO ACHIEVE POLITICAL OBJECTIVES. I FOUND THIS AND HIS REASONING FOR THE PREDICTION RATHER INTERESTING. MINH'S TIMETABLE, SO HE SAID, IS BASED ON POLAND BECOMING CHAIRMAN OF THE ICCA FOR THE MONTH OF MAY. HE SAYS THAT THIS WILL SIGNAL THE COMMUNISTS TO GO ALL OUT WITHOUT WORRYING ABOUT VIOLATION INVESTIGATIONS.

4. MINH WAS UNUSUALLY CALM AND COMPOSED THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE 30-MINUTE CONVERSATION. THE ONLY TIME THAT HE MOVED FORWARD IN HIS CHAIR WAS WHEN WE STARTED TO TALK ABOUT LOC NINH AND AN LOC. THESE AREAS TEND TO RAISE HIS BLOOD PRESSURE. HE SPOKE CONFIDENTLY ABOUT HIS RECAPTURING LOC NINH IN THE NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE, CONDITIONING IT ON THE COMMUNISTS CONTINUING TO SHELL AN LOC, HOWEVER. MINH TOLD ME THAT IF THE COMMUNISTS CONTINUE TO SHELL AN LOC, HE WILL RETALIATE BY STRIKING LOC NINH. HE SAID THAT THIS, TOO, WAS ON THE AGENDA AT YESTERDAY'S MEETING WITH THE VICE PRESIDENT. ACCORDING TO MINH, THE VICE PRESIDENT WILL MAKE WHATEVER ARRANGEMENTS ARE NECESSARY TO BRING THIS PARTICULAR THREAT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE ICSS AND THE TPJMC. WALKNSHAW UNQUOTE  
WHITEHOUSE

SECRET

NMAFVVZCZ

\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* LIMDIS

\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* SECRET

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